

It's okay not to be okay

Acts of community violence have greatly affected our nation, including mass shootings, domestic violence tragedies and deaths at the hands of law enforcement. Collective trauma is a shared emotional reaction to an event with difficult circumstances and devastating outcomes.

People often feel powerless when tragedies occur. You may be experiencing a wide range of emotions including anger, uncertainty, despair, grief, numbness –each is a common reaction to collective trauma.

Ways you can cope

Each of us reacts to and deals with news, events, and stress differently. It is important that you take care of yourself in challenging circumstances:

- Acknowledge and accept how you are feeling and don't try to downplay your emotions.
- Use mindfulness techniques to help you connect with and examine how you are feeling. Visit the Mindfulness Toolkit for a variety of resources to help you do so.
- Stay connected to others; a support network can help you feel less alone.
- Make time for healthy coping and relaxation techniques such as exercising, watching a movie, going on a walk, taking a bath, painting, cooking, etc.
- Unplug from social media.

Your feelings are valid. By taking care of yourself first, you can be in a better position to take care of others.

Helping others cope

When collective trauma occurs, it is instinctual for humans to gather. Below are ways to offer support to your family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and community members.

- Share Empathy. Let others know that whatever they are feeling is okay.
- Ask Directly. If you are concerned that someone is struggling, check in and take the time to truly listen. Ask what support is wanted or needed to help guide you to better assist them.
- Keep Talking. Make an effort to continue talking privately or in group settings about each other's experiences and feelings to help healing begin.

You do not have to cope alone during difficult times. SupportLinc is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year to offer guidance, help build coping skills and boost your emotional wellbeing. Call today to speak with a Care Advocate for support or visit the SupportLinc web portal for more resources.